

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PORT O 01148 01 OF 02 132147Z

72

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DOTE-00 /055 W

----- 129091

R 131035Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7767

INFO COGARD ONSOD

COMNAVELECSYSCOM WASHDC

CNO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PORT OF SPAIN 1148

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, ETRN, TD

SUBJ: CLOSING OF OMEGA STATION TRINIDAD, RETURN  
OF DEFENSE AREAS, AND TERMINATION OF  
RE-ENTRY RIGHTS

COMNAVELECSYSCOM ALSO FOR PME-119

REF: STATE 077316

SUMMARY: ANT EXTENSION OF OMEGA FACILITY TRINIDAD  
BEYOND EXPIRATION OF CURRENT DEFENSE AREAS AGREEMENT  
IN DECEMBER 1977 WOULD REQUIRE NEGOTIATION OF  
COMPLETELY NEW AGREEMENT WITH GOTT PROBABLY INCLUDING  
DIRECT BENEFITS TO TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO. OMEGA  
STATION WOULD NOT CONFLICT WITH CURRENT PLANS FOR  
TRINIDADIAN DEVELOPMENT OF FORMER US BASE AREAS AT  
CHAGUARAMAS, BUT NEGOTIATING EXTENSION OF OMEGA STATION  
COULD BECOME CONTENTIOUS DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUE  
HERE IN AN ELECTION YEAR. FROM POLITICAL STAND-  
POINT, DESIRABLE COURSE WOULD BE TO TERMINATE  
ALL FACILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH FORMER NAVAL BASE  
ON SCHEDULE IN 1977, BUT DECISION WHETHER TO SEEK  
OMEGA EXTENSION ULTIMATELY SHOULD BE BASED ON  
IMPORTANCE OF STATION TO USG AND TO WORLDWIDE  
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PAGE 02 PORT O 01148 01 OF 02 132147Z

NAVIGATIONAL AND RESCUE NETWORK. END SUMMARY.

1. POSSIBLE USG INTEREST IN EXTENDING USE OF OMEGA STATION TRINIDAD BEYOND CURRENT EXPIRATION OF DEFENSE AREAS AGREEMENT IN DECEMBER 1977 RAISES A NUMBER OF SERIOUS QUESTIONS WHICH WE RECOMMEND BE ADDRESSED PROMPTLY IF SUCH AN OPTION IS TO HAVE REALISTIC CHANCE OF FULFILLMENT.

2. WITHIN NEXT EIGHTEEN MONTHS, AND PROBABLY WITHIN NEXT TWELVE MONTHS, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO WILL BE GOING THROUGH A NATIONAL ELECTION. CAMPAIGN RHETORIC THERE CAN EASILY LEAD TO UNHEALTHY REHASH OF STALE CHARGES THAT OMEGA NAVIGATIONAL STATION IS PRIMARILY A MILITARY FACILITY WHICH MAKES TRINIDAD VULNERABLE TO BIG-POWER RIVALRIES. IF ANY OF POTENTIAL OPPOSITION PARTIES TO PRESENT GOVERNMENT SHOULD WIN ELECTION, WE ANTICIPATE THAT NEGOTIATING AN OMEGA AGREEMENT WITH SUCH A GOVERNMENT IN THE FIRST MONTHS OF ITS TENURE WOULD BE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE. AT THIS TIME, HOWEVER, OUR BEST ESTIMATE IS THAT PRIME MINISTER ERIC WILLIAMS AND PEOPLES NATIONAL MOVEMENT (PNM) GOVERNMENT WILL BE RETURNED TO POWER IN NEXT ELECTION.

3. IT IS NOT FEASIBLE TO CONSIDER SIMPLE EXTENSION OF DAA UNDER WHICH USG PRESENTLY OPERATES OMEGA STATION HERE, SINCE GOTT DOES NOT PERCEIVE THAT IT GAINS ANY BENEFITS FROM DAA AND AGREEMENT IS SEEN AS ANACHRONISTIC REMNANT OF COLONIAL ERA AND REMINDER OF DAYS WHEN USG HAD LARGE NAVAL OPERATING BASE IN TRINIDAD. ANY EXTENSION OF OMEGA FACILITY WILL REQUIRE ENTIRELY NEW AGREEMENT WITH TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, NEGOTIATED WITH REGARD TO OMEGA ONLY AND UNRELATED TO FORMER DAA. WE WOULD ANTICIPATE THAT, AT BEST, GOTT WOULD WISH TO SHOW THAT IT OBTAINED DIRECT BENEFITS FROM SUCH AN AGREEMENT, BENEFITS FAR MORE TANGIBLE THAN GENERAL PARTICIPATION IN A WORLDWIDE SYSTEM BENEFITING INTERNATIONAL NAVIGATION. SUCH QUID PRO QUOS MIGHT WELL INCLUDE:

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PAGE 03 PORT O 01148 01 OF 02 132147Z

A) SIGNIFICANT LAND RENT; B) NOMINAL TRINIDAD MANAGEMENT OF THE STATION; AND C) COMMITMENTS AS TO THE TRAINING OR HIRING OF TRINIDADIAN PERSONNEL AND PHASING OUT OF EXCLUSIVELY EXPATRIATE PROFESSIONAL STAFF.

4. IF A PROPOSAL WERE MADE TO THE GOTT, WE MIGHT EITHER GET A FLAT REFUSAL TO CONSIDER A NEW

AGREEMENT, OR A SET OF HARD NEGOTIATIONS NEVERTHELESS  
DESIGNED TO REACH AGREEMENT ON CONTINUATION OF THE  
FACILITY UNDER CONDITIONS WHICH COULD BE POLITICALLY  
SHOWN TO BE PROPITIOUS FOR TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO.  
WHICH OF THESE RESPONSES WE RECEIVED WOULD DEPEND  
DIRECTLY ON THE JUDGEMENT OF PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS  
AND ON THE INTERNAL POLITICAL (E.G. CAMPAIGN)  
CLIMATE AT THE TIME.

5. AMBASSADOR INFORMALLY RAISED THIS ISSUE WITH  
DR. WILLIAMS APRIL 22, NOTING POSSIBILITY THAT IT  
MIGHT BE DESIRABLE FOR TECHNICAL REASONS TO ARRANGE  
FOR CONTINUATION OF THE OMEGA FACILITY IN TRINIDAD  
BEYOND DECEMBER 1977. WILLIAMS DID NOT COMMENT  
DIRECTLY, BUT AT LEAST DID NOT REJECT THE POSSIBILITY  
AND HAS NOT SUBSEQUENTLY LAMBASTED THE USG PUBLICLY  
AS HE WAS WONT TO DO SO IN THE PAST WHEN HE FELT  
WE WRE TRYING TO PRESSURE HIM INTO SOMETHING HE  
DID NOT WANT. THUS PROGNOSIS IS MILDLY FAVORABLE.

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PAGE 01 PORT O 01148 02 OF 02 132159Z

72

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DOTE-00 /055 W

----- 129427

R 131235Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7768

INFO COGARD ONSOD

COMNAVELECSYSCOM WASHDC

CNO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PORT OF SPAIN 1148

6. ANOTHER NEW FACTOR IS PUBLICATION IN THE LAST  
WEEK OF APRIL OF THE CHAGUARAMAS DEVELOPMEDT AUTHORITY'S  
(CDA) FIVE-263-4, TEN-YEAR, AND LONG TERM PLANS  
FOR INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER US BASE  
AREAS AT CHAGUARAMAS. UNTIL THIS PLAN WAS DEVELOPED  
WE WERE UNABLE TO ESTIMATE THE COMPETING PRESSURE FOR

ALTERNATIVE UTILIZATION OF THE PRESENT OMEGA SITE.  
THE CDA PLAN, HOWEVER, DOES NOT RECOMMEND DEVELOP-  
MENT OF THE PRESENT OMEGAHIITE, WHICH BECAUSE OF  
ITS STEEP WOODED TERRAIN THEY HAVE INCLWDED IN  
LAND RECOMMENDED TO BE RESERVED AS NATIONAL PARK

AND WILD-LIFE PRESERVE. THUS, AT LEASTBIN THE  
SHORT RUN OF FIVE TO TEN YEARS, RETENTION OF  
THE OMEGA STATION WOULD NOT APPEAR INCOMPATIBLE WITH  
SCHEDULED DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHAGUARAMAS AREA.

7. THE POLITICAL FACTON , HOWEVER, COULD MAKE AN  
OMEGA NEGOTIATION QUITE DIFFICULT. THIS LEADS US  
TO FEEL THAT, OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL, IT WOULD  
BE DESIRABLE FOR OVERALL US-TRINIDADIAN RELATIONS  
TO CLOSE ALL FACILITTIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE FORMER  
DEFENSE AREAS AGREEMENT WHEN THAT AGREEMENT EXPIRES  
IN 1977. HOWEVER, THE IMPORTANCE OF OMEGA STATION  
TRINIDAD AND OF ITS CONTINUED OPERATION IS AN  
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PAGE 02 PORT O 01148 02 OF 02 132159Z

EVALUATION WHICH IS CRUCIAL TO ANY DECISION AND  
OBVIOUSLY A JUDGEMENT WHICH THIS EMBASSY IS NOT COMPETENT  
TO MAKE. IF THE USG CONSIDERED JUDGEMENT IS  
THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING THE OMEGA FACILITY  
IS SUCH AS TO  
TAKE POTENTIAL POLITICAL LIABILITIES  
INHERENT IN SUCH A SUBJECT SURFACING IN A HEATED  
LOCAL ELECTION YEAR, AND USG IS PREPARED TO  
NEGOTIATE REASONABLE QUID PRO QUOS UNDER  
COMPLETELY NEW AGREEMENT, EMBASSY OF COURSE IS  
PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE WITH GOTT AND TO SUPPORT  
CONTINUATION OF OMEGA AS REQUIRED.

8. WE UNDERSTAND THAT FINAL RESOLUTION OF CONTINUED  
PRESENCE OF OMEGA IN TRINIDAD MUST BE MADE BY  
BEGINNING OF 1977 IN ORDER TO ALLOW FOR ORDERLY  
TRANSFER OF STATION AND/OR FUNCTIONS ELSEWHERE  
IF NECESSARY. SINCE ANY NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE  
SOMWHAT PROTRACTED, A FIRM USG DECISION SHOULD BE  
REACHED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE SO THAT ACTUAL  
NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOTT COULD BEGIN NO LATER THAN  
MID 1976 IF OMEGA IS NOT TO BE PHASE OUT ON  
SCHEDULE.  
MILLER

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## Message Attributes

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